

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly amend claims 1-11, 13, 16, 17 and 20-22 and cancel claims 14, 18 and 19, all without prejudice, as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A convertible ~~eane~~ walking aid comprising a pair of separate walking ~~eanes~~ aids each having an upright support providing an exterior, a foot adjacent a lower end of the support and a handle ~~adjacent an upper end of the support allowing each handle~~ to be grasped by a different hand of a user allowing the ~~eanes~~ walking aids to be used separately and independently, the handles comprising an exterior, a long dimension for accommodating a width of a hand of the user and a short dimension providing a thickness of the handle, and a connector detachably securing the ~~eanes~~ walking aids together in a position wherein the support exteriors, the handle exteriors and the long dimensions of the handles are in side-by-side juxtaposed relation so the ~~eanes walking aids~~, when secured together, can be used as a single ~~eane device~~, and part of both handle exteriors, in the side-by-side position of the support exteriors, provide a combined handle for grasping by the user when the convertible walking aid is used as a single device.

2. (Currently amended) The convertible ~~cane~~ walking aid of claim 1 wherein each foot comprises an resilient pad.

3. (Currently amended) The convertible ~~cane~~ walking aid of claim 2 wherein the resilient pad is at least half of the cross-sectional area of the support.

4. (Currently amended) The convertible ~~cane~~ walking aid of claim 1 wherein the feet, in the side-by-side position of the supports, provide a pair of flat surfaces defining a single plane thereby providing a combined foot for supporting the convertible ~~cane~~ walking aid when it is used as a single ~~cane~~ device.

5. (Currently amended) The convertible ~~cane~~ walking aid of claim 1 wherein the handles are adjacent an upper end of the supports and, in the side-by-side position of the support exteriors, abut ~~and provide a combined handle for grasping by the user when the convertible cane is used as a single cane~~, the supports being generally linear and lying in a common plane, the handles in the side-by-side position of the long dimensions thereof lie in the common plane.

6. (Currently amended) The convertible ~~cane~~ walking aid of claim 5 wherein the combined handle provides a hand receiving section having a curved upper surface, the hand receiving section being not more than about 3" in width.

7. (Currently amended) A convertible walking aid comprising a pair of separate walking aids each having an upright support providing an exterior, a foot adjacent a lower end of the upright and a handle an upper end of the support allowing each handle to be grasped by a different hand of a user allowing the walking aids to be used separately and independently, the handles comprising an exterior, a long dimension for accommodating a width of a hand of the user and a short dimension providing a thickness of the handle, and a connector detachably securing the walking aids together in a position wherein the support exteriors, the handle exteriors and the long dimensions of the handles are in side-by-side juxtaposed relation so the walking aids, when secured together, can be used as a single device, 7. ~~(Previously Amended) The convertible cane of claim 1 wherein the handles, in the side-by-side position of the support exteriors, are spaced apart and one of the handles provides a second handle for grasping by the user when the convertible ~~cane~~ walking aid is used as a single ~~cane~~ device.~~

8. (Currently amended) The convertible ~~cane~~ walking aid of claim 1 wherein the feet each comprise a rubber pad.

9. (Currently amended) The convertible ~~cane~~ walking aid of claim 1 wherein the connector comprises a hook-and-loop fastener on the ~~canes~~ walking aids.

10. (Currently amended) The convertible ~~cane~~ walking aid of claim 1 wherein the connector comprises a key hole slot on one of the canes and a headed pin on the other cane, friction between the pin and slot acting to resist relative vertical movement between the ~~canes~~ walking aids.

11. (Currently amended) The convertible ~~cane~~ walking aids of claim 1 wherein the connector comprises a protuberance fixed to a first ~~cane~~ walking aid at an acute angle and a second cane provides a passage receiving the protuberance and further comprising a latch selectively preventing horizontal movement of the first and second ~~canes~~ walking aids.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently amended) The convertible ~~cane~~ walking aid of claim 1 wherein the connector comprises a slot on each of the ~~canes~~ walking aids which mate in the position wherein the support exteriors are in side-by-side relation and a pivoted tab for movement between a first position residing in both slots and a second position outside at least one of the slots.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently amended) A convertible cane assembly comprising a pair of walking canes each having an upright support providing an exterior, a foot adjacent a lower end of the support and a handle adjacent an upper end of the support allowing each handle to be grasped by a user's hand so the canes are useable separately and independently, the handles comprising an exterior, a long dimension for accommodating a width of a hand of the user and a short dimension providing a thickness of the handle, and a connector securing the canes together in a side-by-side position where the support exteriors and part of the handle exteriors are in facing relation and the long dimension of the handles are in side-by-side juxtaposed relation so the assembly acts as a single cane ~~with the~~

~~juxtaposed handles providing a support for grasping by a user's hand in the side-by-side position and part of both handle exteriors, in the side-by-side position of the support exteriors, provide a combined handle for grasping by the user when the convertible walking cane is used as a single device.~~

17. (Currently amended) The convertible cane assembly of claim 16 wherein the feet, in the side-by-side position of the support exteriors, provide a pair of flat surfaces defining a single plane and thereby provide a support for a user's load.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently amended) A method of using a convertible cane ~~assembly~~ walking aid of the type having a pair of walking ~~cane~~ aids each having an upright support providing an exterior, a foot adjacent a lower end of the support and a handle having an exterior, a long dimension accommodating a width of a hand of the user and a short dimension providing a thickness of the handle, adjacent an upper end of the support allowing each handle to be grasped by a different hand of a user, the method comprising

attaching the canes in side-by-side relation where the support exteriors and the handle exteriors are in facing juxtaposed relation and the long dimension of the handles are in side-by-side juxtaposed relation to provide a single cane walking aid and then using the single ~~cane as a~~ walking aid by grasping and using the handle exteriors as a combined handle; and

detaching the canes from the side-by-side relation and using the ~~canes~~ walking aids separately and simultaneously ~~as canes providing walking aids~~.

21. (Currently amended) The convertible cane walking aid of claim 1 wherein, in the side-by-side juxtaposed relation of the handles, the handles handle exteriors are parallel and abut.

22. (Currently amended) The convertible cane assembly of claim 16 wherein, in the side-by-side juxtaposed relation of the handles, the handles handle exteriors are parallel and abut.